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Boston Municipal Research Bureau

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SPECIAL REPORT

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CHANGES IN BOSTON'S PERSONNEL LEVELS
1982 Sees Restoration of Many Positions Cut in Prior Year

Boston restored 53% of the City departmental jobs cut out in 1981. In all, 1,191 employees were added to City-funded payrolls during the twelve months since January, 1982. The Bureau is concerned about this large increase in light of a projected \$12 million personnel deficit this year. In a July, 1982, Special Report the Bureau questioned the need for establishing or restoring all those positions and thus losing some of the economies achieved in 1981.

From January 12, 1982, to January 11, 1983, the number of City-funded employees rose from 6,520 to 7,711, an increase of 1,191 or 18%. Additional police and fire personnel accounted for 43% of the total mostly due to the minimum manning levels required by the Funding Loan Act, the so-called Tregor bill. Those public safety manning requirements, however, only apply for this fiscal year. Other City departments which showed significant personnel increases in 1982 were Public Works (+181), Library (+65), Inspectional Services (+48), Community School (+91) and Mayor's Office (+15). However, even with the overall personnel increase in 1982, the current number of employees is 1,034 or 12% less than on the payroll in January, 1981.

The number of employees working for the Health and Hospitals Department in 1982 increased by 254 or 7%. This level still represents a 5% decrease from January, 1981. In addition, 17 Suffolk County positions were added primarily in the Penal Institutions Department. Non City-funded positions continued to decline from 529 in 1982 to 450 in 1983, a cut of 79. School Department employees increased by a total of 182 although the number of teachers decreased by 81.

Three-Year Comparison of Personnel Numbers and Costs

As expected, the change in the number of City employees is reflected in departmental personnel spending. Personnel expenditures for the first seven months of this fiscal year, which do not include pending salary increases, were \$7.4 million or 9% higher than for the same period last year. They were, however, \$9.8 million or 10% less than in the same period in FY1981. The Public Works Department represents a good example of the relationship between personnel numbers and spending over the last three years. The number of employees as of January of each year and the personnel costs for the first seven months are as follows: FY1981-636/\$5.5 million; FY1982-406/\$3.8 million; 1983-587/\$4.4 million. A summary of the three-year change is shown below.

	Personnel Numbers ¹			Seven Month Costs (\$ in 000's) ²		
	FY1981	FY1982	FY1983	FY1981	FY1982	FY1983
City	8,745	6,520	7,711	\$99,776	\$82,526	\$89,980
County	553	515	532	4,664	5,342	5,916
Health and Hosp.	4,290	3,822	4,076	34,557	32,913	35,888
Total	13,588	10,857	12,319	\$138,997	\$120,781	\$131,784

¹Personnel numbers as of January of each year.

²Expenditures from July through January.

Personnel/Payroll System

Documenting City employee numbers by department has been facilitated by the partial implementation of a new employment information system. However, the Bureau staff must still manually audit payroll reports for various departments to achieve reasonably accurate data. The City has begun to implement its personnel/payroll system, and now all City departments except a few major line departments such as Police, Library and Public Works are entered onto the system. A quota control system has been developed for all City departments. These two systems will integrate personnel and payroll information for each employee and should insure that only the authorized number will work in a department. Management reports that can be generated from this system should allow department heads to improve personnel administration. A personnel/payroll system with position control has been a key Bureau goal for the last nine years.

Employment Status of City Personnel

City and County employees fall into nine separate employment categories reflecting manner of hiring, type of promotion and extent of job security. The table below summarizes the employment status of those in all regular City departments except the Library, Health and Hospitals and Schools. Of the 430 Library employees about 100 have Civil Service status.

	<u>Employee Total</u>	<u>Appointed</u>	<u>Permanent Civil Ser.</u>	<u>Prov. Non- Civil Ser.</u>	<u>Temp./ Emerg.</u>	<u>Elected</u>
City	6,959	1,195	4,877	816	56	15
County	593	339	95	96	61	2
Federal	372	267	-0-	97	8	-0-
Total	7,924	1,801	4,972	1,009	125	17
%	100%	22.7%	62.7%	12.7%	1.6%	0.3%

Source:A.S.D. Personnel Division. Numbers do not equal Bureau totals.

Civil Service employees represent 63% of the City work force. The number protected by Civil Service in their present positions falls to 57% when 430 employees provisionally appointed to higher grade non-certified positions are excluded. Appointed employees constitute 23% of the work force. Of those 550, or 31% receive collective bargaining rights which affords some job security. Other non Civil Service permanent employees make up 13% of the total. Other short-term temporary workers and 17 elected officials make up the balance.

School Department Personnel

School Department employees paid by City and other outside funds have increased from 7,616 to 7,798, an increase of 182 or 2%, in the twelve months since February, 1982. However, during this time staff cuts occurred for teachers (-81), administrators (-17) and instructional support personnel (-47). Professional support, non-academic full-time and maintenance/supervisory personnel increased by a total of 327. The actual increase would be less if positions were reported in full-time equivalencies since part-time employees account for much of the gain. Regular education teachers have experienced the largest cuts, decreasing by 125. Bilingual teachers have increased by 33. In the last two years the Boston teaching staff has been cut by about 870 positions. Lack of reliable school personnel information has made it impossible for the Bureau to include total school work force numbers in past reports. With full implementation of their own automated position control system this year School officials can better manage personnel operations and the Bureau can more accurately report employee changes.

Detailed Comparison of Boston Personnel Numbers

Department	B.M.R.B. Count 1/1/81	B.M.R.B. Count 1/12/82	B.M.R.B. Count 1/11/83	Change From 1/12/82 To 1/11/83
Adminis. Services	252	257	273	16
Admin. Div.	18	26	16	(10)
Personnel Div.	39	44	40	(4)
Purchasing Div.	27	20	22	2
Budget Div.	37	25	23	(2)
Printing Div.	63	58	62	4
Labor Relations	--	11	9	(2)
Data Proc. Div.	50	55	66	11
Hosp. & Insur.	18	18	18	--
Complaints Div.	--	0	17	17
Assessing	83	65	73	8
Auditing	51	37	35	(2)
Auditorium Commission	7	5	7	2
BRA	72	72	127	55
City Clerk	14	10	11	1
City Council	41	39	41	2
City Record	3	2	2	--
Community Services	23	3	11	8
Consumer Aff. & Licen.	16	13	13	--
EDIC	20	14	7	(7)
Elderly Affairs	105	108	97	(11)
Election	28	25	40	15
Environment	4	9	14	5
Fair Housing Comm.	--	--	3	3
Finance Commission	3	5	4	(1)
Fire	2039	1560	1710	150
Fiscal Affairs	9	12	--	(12)
Inspectional Services	240	217	265	48
Law	53	45	57	12
Library	443	365	430	65
Licensing Board	14	14	14	--
Listing Board	8	--	6	6
Mayor, Office Expense	12	4	19	15
Parks & Recreation	416	232	221	(11)
Cemetery Div.	33	32	32	--
Phys. Handicap. Comm.	1	2	3	1
Police	2925	2140	2507	367
Policy Management	--	--	40	40
Property Equalization	142	156	149	(7)
Public Facilities	240	199	211	12
Community Schools	87	36	127	91
Public Improvement	--	--	17	17
Public Information	--	--	12	12
Public Works	636	406	587	181
Real Prop- Buildings	147	78	74	(4)
Property	15	17	22	5
Registry Div.	32	25	27	2
Rent Control	37	18	18	--
Retirement Board	28	36	39	3
Traffic & Parking	172	155	231	76
Parking Clerk	--	15	38	23
Treasury-Collecting	70	36	31	(5)
-Treasury	--	25	23	(2)
U.S. Bond Allot. Plan	2	--	1	1
Veterans Services	45	19	27	8
Veterans Graves Reg.	3	3	3	--
Workmen's Comp. Serv.	8	9	12	3
<u>OPS & Human Rights</u>	<u>166</u>	<u>--</u>	<u>--</u>	<u>--</u>
Total City-Funded	8745	6520	7711	1191
Non-City Funded	954	529	450	(79)
Health & Hospitals	4290	3822	4076	254
Suffolk County	553	515	532	17
School Department	<u>N/A</u>	<u>7616</u>	<u>7798</u>	<u>182</u>
GRAND TOTAL		19,002	20,567	1565

Conclusion

Restoration in just 12 months of 53% of the City departmental jobs cut in 1981 is reason enough for the Bureau to raise the yellow caution flag. A warning is especially necessary when personnel spending in City departments is projected to exceed authorized levels by over \$12 million. Much of the deficit can be attributed to the fact that no money has been set aside for this year's salary raises. Nevertheless, with the exception of public safety and revenue-generating jobs, City officials should have exercised greater control over personnel costs by limiting the number of restored positions in this year's budget.

In a September, 1982, Special Report the Bureau projected that total Boston expenditures in FY1984 could exceed estimated revenues by some \$50 million. A number of variables have changed since then but estimates of a sizeable gap remain. The City is not out of the woods yet and too many restored positions will only exacerbate its financial problems.

Sale of surplus property should not be the solution for financing these new positions. The Funding Loan Act provides for the sale of surplus property owned by the City. Disposition of the proceeds would, in turn, "free up" funds otherwise required to pay off debt. Since this money is made available through the sale of a capital asset and since the City has not borrowed for capital needs since June, 1980, the Bureau feels the freed-up money should be used for delayed capital improvements, major maintenance projects and other purposes for which the City could incur debt.

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